

# Use Exclusion- Livestock

Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 472



## Definition

Excluding livestock from a specified area to protect, maintain, or improve the quantity and quality of plant, soil, animal, and water resources.

## Criteria

Livestock exclusion is often necessary to protect natural resources from grazing animals. Resources that often need protection are plants, soil, water and wildlife. Fencing is the primary method of excluding livestock. Fences should be built to contain the type of livestock that will be grazing the land. Fences should be properly constructed according to technical standards prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Fences must be inspected and repaired as needed. See Alabama Conservation Practice Standard Code 382–Fence.

## Areas Where Exclusion is Needed

### Cropland

Livestock should be excluded from crop fields during the growing season for desired crops.

### Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers may be forested or grass filter strips. These areas are essential for maintaining water quality.

Livestock grazing in these areas may cause impairment to water quality as well as damage to the vegetation. See Alabama Guidesheet AL 391A–Riparian Forest Buffer.

### Areas Recently Planted or Established to Trees

Hardwood seedlings and saplings are susceptible to damage from livestock grazing. Livestock must be excluded from hardwoods. Pines are more compatible with livestock grazing but livestock should be excluded until at least the second growing season. Goats and sheep should be excluded until the trees are 6 to 8 feet high.

### Highly Erodible Areas

Livestock should be excluded from areas with severe soil erosion and from areas that have high erosion potential. Concentrations of animals and continued use of the same area can accelerate soil erosion. Exclusion is essential on all areas where plantings have recently been made for erosion control.

### Wildlife Plantings

Plantings for wildlife should be fenced where livestock are present. Livestock should be excluded from areas that are managed exclusively for wildlife. Livestock may compete for food with wildlife. Overgrazing may have a negative effect on nesting for certain species of wildlife.

### Recreation Areas and Esthetics

Presence of livestock is sometimes incompatible with recreational uses. Recreation and esthetics may be a primary or secondary management objective for many landowners. Overgrazing can diminish the recreational value and esthetics of the area by damaging vegetation, accelerating erosion and impairing water quality.

## Streams, Water Bodies and Wetlands

Water quality is a primary concern of everyone. Water quality can be degraded by sedimentation and/or harmful bacteria from animal waste. Excluding livestock is one method of reducing this water quality degradation. Fencing can be used to control livestock access.

## **References**

USDA-NRCS Alabama Conservation Practice  
Standard Code 472 – Use Exclusion. September,  
2000.

USDA-NRCS Alabama Conservation Practice  
Standard Code 382 – Fence. November, 1997

USDA-NRCS Alabama Conservation Practice  
Standard Code 391A – Riparian Forest Buffer.  
January, 1999.

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